

Contributions

THE SERVICE OF GIVING

B. C. MOOMAW

There is entirely too much said and too much written on the subject of Christian giving, the most of which is in the nature of tiresome exhortation, repetitional appeals, persistent begging, some times assuming the most humiliating character of nagging, until it becomes a weariness that cannot be borne. We are convinced that it is all wrong, and that it is a source of great injury to the church. Think, for instance, of the effect of such a spectacle upon intelligent outsiders, unconverted people who look on from the back benches. There they see God's ambassador standing in the pulpit arguing, exhorting, importuning, begging, urging the heirs of eternal life to disburden themselves of a few dimes for Christ's sake, and for the sake of souls. Before them, rank upon rank, bench after bench, sit the beneficiaries of everlasting salvation, who are in a short time to be richer than all the dreams of all the millionaires, but they are apparently unmoved by the zeal of the preacher, and perfectly willing to humiliate him, and humiliate his Lord before the eyes of the world, for the sake of the dirty dollars which stick so close and snug in the bottom of the pocket, and refuse to come forth tho an angel call. Christ gave his all, his heaven, his life, his blood, for these poor sinners, and is going to raise them to his throne, and make them the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, infinite in glory and honor, yet the proposition to give one tenth of the filthy lucre of our covetousness in return for such unlimited beneficence meets with astonished protest, lifting of the eyebrows, firm shaking of the head. It is too much, yes, entirely too much, preposterous, unnecessary, exorbitant, extravagant, belongs to the law, but not to the Gospel. The outsider takes notice of this, and while the saints are singing, "Were the whole realm of nature mine," he thinks his thoughts, and his thoughts are neither complimentary to the saints nor to the religion they profess.

Let us say a thing in your ears. *It ought never to be necessary for the preacher to ask for a dollar from year beginning to year end, for any cause connected with the church.* What are your deacons for, if not to attend to these temporalities of the church, and if they don't attend to these necessary matters, what are they good for? And what are the members good for if they make it difficult or impossible for the deacons to quietly and effectively collect the needed support of God's house without having to make a public matter of it, and what is worse, a public scandal? I do not hesitate to say that these spectacles which we often see in the

church are a scandal and a shame. At this point our ethical standards are entirely too low, as they are apt to be where money is involved. The mammon of unrighteousness ought never be allowed to set his dirty foot within the sacred precincts of the pulpit. If the deacons do not attend to the temporalities of the church, let the congregation turn them out. If the church makes it impossible for the deacons to perform their duty, let the deacons turn them out. It is no wonder that there is but a halting spiritual life in some churches. The Lord can forgive sin, but he can't help being disgusted with meanness and niggardliness. It is a shame for the pastor's salary to be a week in arrears. You owe it not to him, but to the Lord, whose representative and ambassador he is. No revival of religion can be expected in the Church Of the Dear Dollar. If religion gets into Brother Stingy's soul, it will have to bore a hole with a gimlet to get in at, and hollow out a little place to stay. It is the office of religion to save souls, but there has to be a soul before it can be saved. If the cause of Christ is suffering for what the church could do, but will not, then it is about time to look somewhere else for the cause of Christ. It isn't there. These truths will make us angry if the root of bitterness is in our hearts, but if we really love God, and seek the honor of our Savior, we will repent in sackcloth and ashes. And we will do the first works, lest He come and remove our candlestick out of its place.

EVERY CHRISTIAN A WORKER AND HIS REWARD

MRS. ETTA GILLIN

It is well for us to look back to the church of the first century, especially the church of Pentecost, in order to learn of them. Nowhere since then, unless it be in the foreign mission field has the church achieved such notable victories. Not that in those days there were no defects such as the apostasy and hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira but rather that in the church of that period there is so much of the ideal that appeals to our common sense as the highest in zeal and effectiveness of method which the world has ever seen.

The causes of these apparent results are doubtless many and various. Only one of the contributing causes to this wonderful phenomenon can be discussed here.

Doubtless the zeal and self-sacrifice of this primitive church is worthy of emulation, a thing to be desired in the church of this century.

Perhaps it will not be disputed that these five things are sufficient indication of the spirit of the church of that day:

1. The Pentecostal prayer meeting which lasted the ten days from the ascension to Pentecost.

2. The fearless preachers of the day of Pentecost and the days following.

3. The Pentecostal revival in which three thousand souls were converted in a day.

4. The communion of worldly possessions as a result of their religion.

5. The common evangelism which sent every Christian out to work for the conversion of souls to the teachings of Christ.

This last only we shall discuss as a feature of the apostolic church. It and the other features named were both causes and results; they were results in that they were caused by the wonderful pouring out of the Holy Spirit and obedience to the commands of their Master. They were causes in many cases in that some of them reacted to produce in part some of the results noticed.

In the lack of a common evangelism our modern churches are defective. No wonder that three thousand people composed of men from every nation of the then known world were preached to and converted in a day.

We have usually ascribed this wonderful result to Peter's preaching as far as human instrumentality was concerned, but it was due to the fact that one hundred and twenty disciples, at least, were out among the people while Peter was preaching. Hence we should remember the activity of the lay members. Listen, "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." And when the multitude were attracted by the sound and each heard the Gospel in his own native language it is said that "They were all amazed and marveled saying, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?"

Again in order that you may see that this common evangelism was not peculiar to the day of Pentecost, but an ordinary proceeding in the early church turn to Acts the eighth chapter. There the persecution which followed the death of Stephen is described.

In the fourth verse it is recorded that "They therefore that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." But some one says this refers to the apostles: Turn to the first verse of the chapter and read, "And at that time there arose a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." Hence it seems that it was the lay members who "went everywhere preaching the word."

May this not account for the wonderful success which crowned the early church in its soul-saving efforts as far as method is concerned?